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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 IO-10 SAB-01 AID-05 IGA-01

CG-00 DOTE-00 OMB-01 /071 W
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O P 081405Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9959

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

JCS

SECDEF

USDEL MC

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN

CINCUSNAVEUR

USEUCOM

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 6024

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR PFOR GR US

SUBJ: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS: ELEFSIS PIER AND
OTHER MATTERS

REF ATHENS 5550

1. CALOGERAS THIS MORNING GAVE STEARNS GREEK GOVERNMENT'S
RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL THAT THE U.S. NAVY BE PERMITTED
TO USE THE ELEFSIS PIER ON A LIMITED BASIS FOR AN INTERIM
PERIOD OF ONE YEAR AFTER TERMINATION OF THE HOMEPORTING
PROGRAM. CALOGERAS SAID THAT FINMIN BITSIOS HAD OUTLINED
OUR PROPOSAL TO CARAMANLIS WHO HAD BEEN "RELUCTANT" TO
ACCEPT IT. ACCORDING TO CALOGERAS, AFTER CONSIDERABLE
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DISCUSSION THE PRIME MINISTER HAD AGREED THAT STARTING

OCTOBER 1, 1975 AND ENDING JANUARY 1, 1976 THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT UP TO FIVE SHIP VISITS PER MONTH AT ELEFSIS.

2. WHEN STEARNS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE LIMITED DURATION OF THIS INTERIM AGREEMENT, CALOGERAS SAID THAT IN DECEMBER THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER A FURTHER EXTENSION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE COULD GIVE NO REPEAT NO ASSURANCE THAT CARAMANLIS, OR FOR THAT MATTER BITSIOS, WOULD APPROVE EXTENSION AT THAT TIME, BUT HE BELIEVED THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER AGAIN. HE ASSUMED THAT THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD A FURTHER EXTENSION WOULD BE DETERMINED BY THEIR READING OF THE POLITICAL CLIMATE AND THE LOCAL REACTION, OR LACK OF REACTION, PRODUCED BY THE SHIP VISITS WHICH WOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER.

3. MOVING TO THE SUBJECT OF HELLENIKON, CALOGERAS STATED THAT BITSIOS HAD REEMPHASIZED TO HIM THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT ACCEPT A US FORCE LEVEL LARGER THAN THE NUMBER OF GREEK MILITARY PERSONNEL SCHEDULED TO BE BASED AT HELLENIKON. SINCE THIS FIGURE WOULD BE BETWEEN 500 AND 600 HAF OFFICERS AND MEN, THE US PRESENCE WOULD HAVE TO BE REDUCED TO A MAXIMUM OF 400 TO 450 PERSONNEL. STEARNS COMMENTED THAT THE GOG POSITION HAD BEEN REPORTED TO WASHINGTON ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT FURTHER IN SEPTEMBER. MEANWHILE, HE ASKED GREEK SIDE TO BEAR IN MIND THE UNIQUE ROLE OF HELLENIKON IN SUPPORT OF VITAL US ACTIVITIES IN GREECE AND IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

4. FINALLY, CALOGERAS NOTED THAT OUR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE RECESSED UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER. HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER BITSIOS INTENDED TO BRIEF GREEK PRESS ON RESULTS OF THE SUBGROUP MEETINGS, BUT SAID THAT WHATEVER GREEK GOVERNMENT SAID WOULD BE LOW-KEYED AND ON BACKGROUND. LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER, CALOGERAS COMMENTED THAT GREEK SIDE WOULD LIKE TO SCHEDULE SUBGROUP MEETINGS ON HELLENIKON AND STATUS OF FORCES FOR THE SECOND WEEK IN SEPTEMBER. STEARNS RECALLED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT WE WERE RAPIDLY ARRIVING AT THE POINT WHERE FURTHER PROGRESS IN SUBGROUP MEETINGS WOULD DEPEND ON PROGRESS TO BE MADE IN GREECE'S DISCUSSIONS WITH NATO. HE ASKED WHETHER A DEFINITE DATE HAD BEEN SET FOR NATO DISCUSSIONS. CALOGERAS SAID THAT, SPEAKING CONFIDENTIALLY, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD IN MIND SEPTEMBER 15 FOR DISCUSSIONS IN BRUSSELS TO BEGIN. STEARNS OBSERVED THAT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT MIGHT BE REALISTIC TO DEFER OUR

BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS AT THE SUBGROUP LEVEL UNTIL OCTOBER. CALOGERAS REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THIS IDEA, SAYING THAT WHILE CARAMANLIS AND BITSIOS UNDERSTOOD THE CLOSE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE BILATERAL AND NATO DISCUSSIONS, THEY NEVERTHELESS BELIEVED THAT THE SOFA AND HELLENIKON SUBGROUPS COULD RESOLVE A NUMBER OF ISSUES NOT REPEAT NOT DIRECTLY DEPENDENT ON THE OUTCOME OF GREECE'S NATO DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDINGLY, THE GREEK SIDE REQUESTED THAT WE BE PREPARED TO CONDUCT SUBGROUP MEETINGS ON SOFA AND HELLENIKON IN THE SECOND WEEK IN SEPTEMBER.

5. COMMENT: THE GREEK RESPONSE TO OUR COMPROMISE PROPOSAL ON THE ELEFSIS PIER DOES NOT GIVE US AS MUCH AS WE ASKED FOR, BUT DOES SERVE TO KEEP OPEN THE QUESTION OF THE PIER'S ULTIMATE DISPOSITION. WE RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT THE NAVY ACCEPT THE GOG'S OFFER AND THAT UP TO FIVE SHIP VISITS BE PROGRAMMED FOR ELEFSIS STARTING IN OCTOBER.

6. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO ACCEDE TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR SOFA AND HELLENIKON SUBGROUPS TO MEET IN SEPTEMBER. WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH CALOGERAS THAT BOTH OF THESE SUBJECTS CAN BE PROFITABLY DISCUSSED WITHOUT IMPINGING ON NATO DISCUSSIONS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME. FOR PLANNING PURPOSES WE SUGGEST THAT SUBGROUP MEMBERS BE PREPARED TO ARRIVE IN ATHENS THE WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 13 TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15. KUBISCH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY BASES, NAVAL SHIPS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS06024
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750274-0767
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750867/aaaachbg.tel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ATHENS 5550
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <09 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS: ELEFSIS PIER AND OTHER MATTERS
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, GR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006